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AYASHIYA

by BANNO Mutsumi

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Ayashiya v2 c7

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Chapter 7 Be Sure to Express Your Gratitude

Central District Demon Raid Squad Headquarters
WHY?!
UNLESS WE ALL WORK TOGETHER.
IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CAPTURE THE INTERLOPER!!
SIGN: CONFERENCE ROOM 1
Ugh
?
HEADBAND: MONTH LONG STRENGTHENING
EXCUSE ME!!
!!

WHAT IS IT?! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION RIGHT NOW!
EEK ! INUSAHE-SAMA...!
I APOLO-GIZE.
FIRST OF ALL, THIS IS A SACRED PLACE IN WHICH ONLY WE MAY ENTER--
COME ON, CALM DOWN CHUUKEN*.
DON'T CALL ME THAT, AT LEAST DURING MEETINGS!!
WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HERE?
RIGHT..
W-WELL..
*TAN FAITHFUL DOG

BANDITS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS PERIOD IN WHICH DEMONS DO NOT APPEAR TO INFILTRATE THE CAPITAL.
I'VE RECEIVED WORD THAT THEY HAVE STARTED A FIRE ON FOURTH STREET IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT.
THE FIRE ON SITE IS NOT DYING OUT.
AND THE SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS ARE IN A STATE OF EXTREME PANIC.
THOUGH THIS IS A HUMAN MATTER, I WANTED TO LET EVERYONE HERE KNOW..

UNDERSTOOD.
THEN LET US END THE MEETING HERE.
フヌ
!?
BUT... PLEASE WAIT!
WE'RE STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF...

WE HAVE REACHED OUR CONCLUSION
THIS NIGHT FESTIVAL, AND THE SEARCH FOR THE INTER-LOPER,
ENDED IN A TRULY UNSIGHTLY MANNER.
THE PHENOMENON OF THE FLUTE MUSIC. IF THAT WAS THE WORK OF THE INTERLOPER,
THEY ARE BEYOND ANYTHING WE'VE KNOWN THUS FAR.
IF WE WISH TO CAPTURE ITS TAIL, WE MUST PROCEEDS WITH MORE CAUTION.
AND SO, HENCEFORTH.

AND SQUAD TWO, LET BY "SHION", WILL BE THE ONLY ONES TO INVESTIGATE COVERTLY!
SQUAD ONE, LED BY "HAKUYOU"-SAMA HERE,
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS..
COVERTLY?! DO YOU MEAN FROM US, TOO?!
DO YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER INJURY TO IT WITH SIMPLE STRATEGIES, YOUNG ONE?
THIS CASE IS ONE WHICH AFFECTS OUR HONOR!
AND REPORT NEW FINDINGS IF ANY THAT ALONE IS FINE.
THE OTHER SQUADS WILL PROCEED WITH GENERAL MISSIONS,

MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE MATTER WHICH HAS BEEN LAID BEFORE US
IF THAT DISTRICT IS BURNING DOWN BY THE FIRES OF EVIL MEN,
IMPURE AURA MAY ACCUMULATE AND HASTEN THE REOPENING OF THE DEMON GATE.
WE SHOULD FIRST PRIORITIZE DEALING WITH THAT ABOVE ALL ELSE.
PLEASE WAIT!
W...

THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU TO CALM DOWN, CHUUKEN.
I AM CALM!!
ARE YOU ALL OKAY WITH THIS?!
STOP BARKING, CHUUKEN
THAT'S RIGHT, CHUUKEN
CHUUKEN, SIT
UGH!
YOU BASTARDS...!
RESTRAIN YOURSELF HERE.
FOR NOW, DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
BESIDES, AS PROTECTORS, WE CAN'T IGNORE THE MATTER BEFORE US.
SAKI!
Y-YES!!
WE'RE RETURNING TO THE NORTHERN DISTRICT
WE'RE GOING BACK AT A FULL SPRINT!
GYRN
WAIT A SECOKD, ME TOO?!

PLEASE!
MY HUSBAND IS STILL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIRE...
GET BACK, IT'S DANGEROUS
HAS ANYONE SEEN A CHILD?!
UGH.. THERE'S NO WORD FROM THE OFFICIAL THAT BARELY MANAGED TO RUSH THROUGH.
PLEASE, DON'T COME ANY CLOSER
SO IS MY GROUP!
IT'S NO GOOD
IT'S NOT DYING DOWN AT ALL!
THIS LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A SPECIAL COMPOUND IN THE GUNPOWDER...
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO CREATE AN OPENING UNLESS IT BURNS OUT TO SOME EXTENT!
DAMN BANDITS!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON ON THE OTHER SIDE...?!

WHAT...
IS GOING ON EXACTLY?!
THIS SHOULDN'T BE!
DEMONS DON'T APPEAR IN THE CITY TONIGHT!
MUCH LESS, THE RUMORED SHUTEN-DOJI FROM THE MOUNTAIN. THERE'S NO WAY IT SHOULD APPEAR!!
GAH!
LOOK!
IT'S WOUND IS DISAPPEARING ...!!

... What is he doing?
That twerp.
Haa
Haa
THIS THING'S A REAL DEMON!
NORMAL SWORDS WON'T WORK!
IT REALLY IS A DE-MON...
Who are you calling a rubber ball?!!
IT SPOKE!!
THAT BLACK RUBBER BALL LOOKING THING ATTACHED TO IT...!
... AND,
WHAT'S THIS?
Because the troublemaker this fool is looking after flew off on his own again,
And he's making me waste my strength for no good reason!!
I'm in an extremely foul mood right now!!

Oh?
!?
WAH!
?
And this is the strength I worked so hard to build up from eating during the night festival!!
B-
BOSS..
AH.
スッ!!

I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON,
BUT DEMONS APPEAR TO EAT HUMANS, RIGHT?
IF THAT'S THE CASE, EAT HIM.
HE'S PERFECT AS FEED
UGH!
COUGH!
BOSS! THEY'RE HERE.
OUR MEN'S BOATS.
SO THE PAWNS HAVE COME...
THIS WATERWAY IS CONNECTED TO THE RIVER IN THE MOUNTAIN
ONCE WE ENTER THE MOUNTAIN, WE WIN.

I'LL SLOWLY TURN YOUR BODIES INTO SMALL BITS OF DEMON FEED
THE NEXT TIME YOU STOP YOUR WORK,
THIS UNEXPECTED FACTOR IS JUST ONE SMALL DEMON.
ALL OF YOU,
LOOKS LIKE THE FIRE WILL LAST HALF AN HOUR AT MOST...
CRACKLE CRACK
DE-MON ?!
Y-
YES!!
HURRY AND LOAD THE CARGO.
Haa
AGAIN,
YOU COME TO SAVE ANOTHER'S LI~
Haa
DIDN'T YOU THROW THAT MASK AWAY...?
WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?
ごろん
All right, Jin, run for it!
What's this, he returned the redhead more easily than I expected
COUGH
...YOU,
LIAR.

YOU'RE...
TOO QUICK TO GIVE UP...!!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING I DO.. OTHER THAN GIVE UP...?
..HAH
YOU SAVED MY LIFE,
AND I ENTERED THE CAPITAL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE... IT WAS THE NEXT DAY.
THE MAN I THOUGHT I KILLED WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS APPEARED, AND I WENT BACK TO BEING HALF DEAD IN AN INSTANT.
Ahh?
This wouldn't have happened if you didn't go rushing off.
How could we...stayed hidden...
I CAN'T LEAVE HIM ALIVE!
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO LIVE A PROPER LIFE BECAUSE OF THAT GUY.
EVEN AFTER I WAS ON MY OWN, MY WAY OF LIFE DIDN'T CHANGE BECAUSE HIS SHADOW IS INGRAINED IN ME.

IT'S TRUE THAT I DIDN'T CHECK BACK THEN.
I DIDN'T MAKE SURE TO FINISH HIM OFF.
BECAUSE I'M UNABLE TO ERASE EVERY LITTLE PIECE OF HIM,
I'M A "HUMAN BEING" THAT'S UNABLE TO LIVE A PROPER LIFE.
...DEEP DOWN,
I HATE "THAT" PART OF ME SO MUCH THAT I CAN'T STAND IT...!!
...THEN,
TODAY'S THE DAY.
THIS IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO SEVER THAT HATRED

THE "SOURCE" OF YOUR HATRED, WHICH YOU REALLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEVER IF YOU KILLED HIM,
IS ALIVE AND APPEARED BEFORE YOU AGAIN.
NO MATTER HOW HARSH YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES, OR HOW MUCH YOU HATE YOUR HUMAN BODY FROM YOUR DISAPPOINTMENT IN HUMANS
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO BECOME A DEMON
YOU CAN STILL START LIFE ANEW AS A HUMAN
...YOU ARE NOT POWERLESS,
LIKE ME...
UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING WITHOUT BORROWING THE STRENGTH OF A DEMON,
Worship me.
WITH A BODY THAT CAN'T ADAPT WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE UNLESS I HIDE THE FACT THAT I'M HUMAN.

I'M JEALOUS OF YOU.
PLEASE LET ME GET ON THE BOAT, TOO!
IF YOU LEAVE ME HERE WITH MY LEG LIKE THIS..
N-NO WAY, BOSS...
THE SHUTEN-DOJI!!
WAH!
BOSS!
EEK,
EEK ...
THAT'S WHY,
NOW THAT YOU ARE USELESS, YOU'RE DONE FOR.

You fool! Troublemaker!! I told you to run for it when you nab the redhead!!
YOU RUN.
THIS WILL BE MEANING-LESS IF WE RUN
!
!!!!!
WHAT'S THIS, YOU SHITTY DEMON
DID YOU ALREADY FINISH EATING THE BRATS!

HAHAHAHA.
KEH
JEA-LOUS.. HUH
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I WAS EVER TOLD THAT..
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'LL LAST, AND THIS MIGHT REALLY BE IT FOR ME
THEN FINE THAT "CHANCE"...
I'LL GO ALONG WITH WHAT YOU SAID..!

MURDER HIM, RIGHT NOW!!!
YEAH!!
Y-
UGH
HE'S FAST...

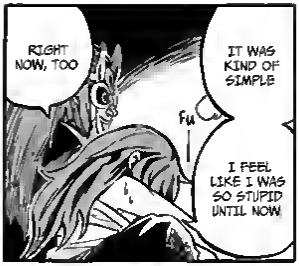
And finish this up already!!
Ahh— fine— if it's going to be like this, go wild.
WA HH!
AHH, THERE'S MORE..
..THE SMALL DEMON,
Hurry! You're planning to draw your weapon with the very end!!
THERE ARE TWO OF THEM..!
R-
RUN FOR IT! HURRY!!
THEY WILL HAVE OUR HEADS ON DISPLAY BY MORNING IF WE'RE CAUGHT!
TH-THIS IS NO GOOD! THE OFFICIALS WILL COME AT THIS RATE!

YOU FOOLS!!
HOLD IT...

ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME?
THAT'S FINE YOU WON'T CHANGE NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU STRUGGLE
EVEN IF YOU KILL ME, YOU WILL ALWAYS ..
REMAIN THE TOOL WHICH I CREATED.
YOU WILL NEVER BECOME A PROPER HUMAN BEING..!
UNTIL NOW
THANKS TO YOU, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY MANNERS,
AND I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE AS A HUMAN BEING BACK THEN.
"THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF ME."

!!
...THE FIRE'S DIED DOWN!!

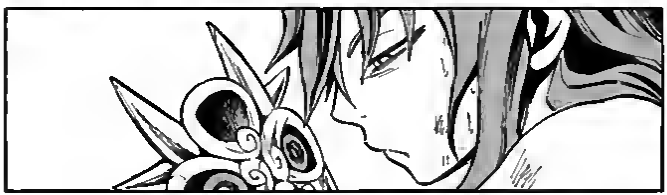
EVERYONE, LET'S GO!!
THERE IS AN OPENING!
DAMN BANDITS, PREPARE YOUR...
SELVES ...?


RIGHT NOW, TOO
IT WAS KIND OF SIMPLE
Fu
I FEEL LIKE I WAS SO STUPID UNTIL NOW

HAHA, THEY'RE BEING ARRESTED

DO YOU STILL NEED THAT?

HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP THAT ON?



THAT MEETING WAS A SHOCK.
THIS MASK WANTED TO MEET HIM ONE MORE TIME THAT'S ANOTHER REASON I WORE IT
..THERE WAS ANOTHER TIME WHEN MY LIFE WAS SAVED BEFORE
BECAUSE
IT WAS A DEMON
Hmm?
IT'S NOT STRANGE FOR THERE TO BE A DEMON WHO WOULD SAVE A HUMAN, IS IT?!
FIRST OF ALL, JUST LOOK AT YOU TWO
..THAT'S TRUE
?
THAT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN
WHAT'S WITH THAT FACE OF DISBELIEF?
IT REALLY HAPPENED!!

IN AN INSTANT,
THEY CHANGE EVERYTHING THAT'S PRECIOUS INTO NOTHING
ONES WHO STEAL ARE ALL THE SAME
BECAUSE THERE ARE HUMANS.. WHO DO THE SAME THING AS DEMONS, TOO

MIGHT NATURALLY BE TRUE, TOO...
THEN THE OPPOSITE,

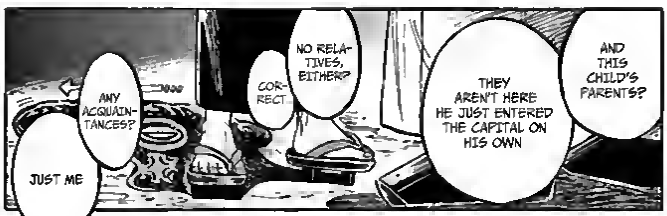
—WHAT'S THIS?
IS EVERYTHING ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF?
BUT THIS IS HORRIBLE.
Haa
Haa
Haa
Haa

WHAT'S YOUR NAME...?
SPEAKING OF WHICH,

Oh?
Gone!

WHY?! DO I?!! HAVE TO GO ALONG WITH THIS APPRENTICE'S TRAINING?!!!
BREATH...? ACTUALLY, WHY ARE YOU SHORT OF...
GYOH!
WHAT'S THIS?!
A CHILD?!!
WHERE DID HE JUST FALL FROM?!!
WAH, THESE ARE HORRIBLE WOUNDS!
A SURVIVING CASUALTY?
TREAT-MENT, QUICKLY! RELIEF SQUAD!
DOES ANYONE, KNOW THIS CHILD?!
ANY RELATIVES?!
FALL
!?

ズイ。
THAT'S MY GUEST


AND THIS CHILD'S PARENTS?
THEY AREN'T HERE HE JUST ENTERED THE CAPITAL ON HIS OWN
NO RELATIVES, EITHER?
CORRECT
ANY ACQUAINTANCES?
JUST ME

THEN WHO ARE YOU?
I...

AM THE SECOND OWNER OF THE "AYASHIYA" DRY GOODS STORE.
JIN IS THE NAME
HIIRAGI-DONO, THAT CHILD JUST SAID "AYASHIYA"...
AHH, I WAS SO NERVOUS!!
Yeah...
HE DID...
I'LL ASK HIS NAME WHEN HE WAKES UP.
THAT KID'S FACE DIDN'T LOOK TOO GOOD..
"THAT INCI-DENT", IS IT?
REALLY NOW.
I RECALLED SOMETHING UNPLEASANT...
—WHAT DO YOU THINK, HAKUYOU-SAMA?

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT THE FLUTE MUSIC IN QUESTION ?
USING A JOKE OF A SPELL LIKE THAT,
IT'S PROBABLY "THAT MAN", JITCHUU HAKKU
!
THEN... ARE YOU SAYING HE IS STILL ALIVE AFTER ALL?!
AND HE'S BEGUN TO MOVE ONCE MORE..
HAS IT BEEN ABOUT HALF A YEAR NOW ?
SINCE THE "AYASHIYA INCIDENT".

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